

THE LIGUORIAN

In the Service of

OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP

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THE LIGUORIAN

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DECEMBER, 1929

No. 12

Bethlehem's Mystery

Thou'rt come, Sweet Babe,
A world to save—
Thy world's a low
Lost crib and cave.

Thou cam'st to save—
O task supreme!—
Thy tiny hands
So helpless seem!

Thou wouldst engage
The powers of sin—
The cold winds blue
Thy baby skin.

Thou art our God—
Thine is all gold—
Yet beggar's rags
Thy limbs enfold.

Thou cam'st to teach
The way of light—
Thou—mute—in dark
Of cave and night.

Yet lo!—tis done
By hearth and shrine—
Night turns to day—
Cribs gleam and shine!

And all the world's
A cave to-night—
Where millions kneel
In Thy sweet light.

This make me see—
A shed well may
Be heaven if Thou,
Sweet Babe, there stay.

—A. T. Zeller, C. Ss.R.

Father Tim Casey

MY FIRST CHRISTMAS AT COLLEGE

C. D. McENNERY, C.Ss.R.

It was night, quiet and restful after the hard work of Christmas Day and the strenuous days that preceded it. The two priests drew their chairs nearer to the hearth. Father Casey stirred the smouldering logs until they sent a shower of dancing sparks up the chimney and burst into a ruddy flame; then he sank back with a sigh of contentment and an affectionate smile for his friend and guest, the Reverend Benedict Dietz.

For a long time neither spoke. Their friendship was too deep and intimate to require expression in words. Each was busy with thoughts of the past, recollections of other Christmas feasts spent with other companions, in other surroundings: Christmas in the dear old home of childhood (long since passed over to strangers) with the mystery of the crib in the parish church and the surprises of the tree; Christmas with gay young friends, glad songs, and joyous laughter; Christmas in the early days of the priesthood when great projects beckoned and hope ran high; Christmas saddened by the sudden taking off of those on whom they leaned for love and guidance; Christmas when sorrows and loneliness and disillusionment drowned the music and shut out the brightness; and this Christmas when a mighty peace and trust had come into the souls of these veteran warriors in the army of the Lord, the hundred-fold promised, even in this life, to all who leave home and friends for His Name's sake.

Benedict Dietz was the first to break the silence.

"Father Tim," he demanded abruptly, "what is the happiest Christmas you ever spent?"

Without a moment's hesitation the other replied:

"My first Christmas as a boy in the seminary."

Father Dietz stiffened in his chair; his dark eyes flashed in the firelight as he cried:

"Isn't it a fact! I see it all as vividly as though it were only yesterday. The days before had been days of hard work and prayer and penance. I went to bed, thoroughly tired out and slept soundly. Into my dreams there came the sound of angels' voices. They were chant-

ing that matchless Christmas hymn: 'Apparuit, apparuit quem genuit Maria.'"

"Exactly," Father Casey broke in excitedly; "I heard those angels, too. Slowly, slowly dream melted into reality. And then I realized that, instead of the harsh rising bell that had so often ordered us to a new day's task, our silver-throated sopranos (tenors??) were singing to arouse us for the midnight Mass."

"And what a Mass that was, Father Tim! To my inexperienced eyes, the dear dingy old seminary chapel was a glimpse of the heavenly Jerusalem. I have since knelt at the richest shrines and lingered awe-struck beneath the mighty arches of the world's great cathedrals, but none of them has ever sent the blood tingling through my veins as the sight of the chapel at my first midnight Mass in the seminary."

"Do you remember the crib, Father Ben?"

"Do I remember it! How could I ever forget it! I would give all the pleasures life still holds in store for me in exchange for the joy I felt looking at that Christmas Crib."

"The mystery of it all added to the effect," Father Casey commented. "That great black curtain stretched across the entrance of the side chapel, behind whose sacred folds not even the Rector dared enter, where the crib builders had been working for weeks, so wrought upon my imagination that I was ready for anything. When I came in at midnight, saw the curtain gone and, in its place, a perfect Bethlehem, I was entranced. I myself had waded through the snow on Smith's Hill with the head sacristan to chop the evergreens, but had anybody told me they were the same as those century-old cedars overshadowing the grotto of Bethlehem, I should have called him crazy."

"And the countless candles arranged in designs—"

"And the greens and the flowers—"

"And the garlands draped from the ceiling and twined about the pillars—"

"And the Rector's sermon—"

"Ah, the Rector's sermon, I can hear him even now: 'There was no room for Him.' You know. I could actually see Mary and Joseph going to the house of one of their cousins and anticipating such a warm welcome, 'but there was no room.' 'Then they went to another cousin's home. 'We should be so happy to have you spend the night with us,

but really we have no room.' Then they went to the inn. Richer guests were expected, and so there 'was no room.' That sermon did more than anything else I know of, outside of God's grace and my mother's prayers to confirm my vocation and make me resolve to devote my life at every cost to the blessed task of making room in the hearts of men for Him who, on Christmas night came into His own, and His own received Him not. What wonder we made a fervent Communion that night.

"And we went back to bed and closed our eyes for a long, long sleep. Next morning, after a breakfast, the like of which we had never tasted since we came to the seminary, we lined up before the Rector's room to receive our boxes from home. And we carried them off to the hall in triumph to unearth their hidden treasures and share them with our friends. What oranges and apples and candies; what roasted fowl; what cookies and fruit cakes and mince pies.

"But we don't forget the ceremony of the distribution of the Christmas mail, Father Ben. What a pile of it. The Rector had them before him as he stood there calling out our names, ten, fifteen, twenty times. How we crowded through to receive such a cherished note. How eagerly we perused them and passed them to our friends—all but one, the letter from mother. That was too sacred to be opened there before the public gaze; we turned it over and over, examined the postmark, studied the handwriting, then tucked it away next to our heart until we could find a quiet corner to open and read and reread those precious lines and shed a furtive tear for the mother that loved us so."

"And Bob Wirth, who seemed to know just the right moment to go to the piano and strike up a college song to keep the fellows from getting blue."

"I wonder," Father Casey murmured, "what kind of Christmas Father Bob is having tonight."

"He is working among the lepers; but I'll wager he is making even those outcasts forget their misery in a flood of Christmas joy."

"And poor Jim Tracy, God rest him, how quietly he made up a big generous box for the young convert whose family disowned him when he went to study for the priesthood."

"Yes, Jim could always think of such kind, tactful things to do, and after he had done them, they seemed so simple and natural, I wondered why they had never occurred to me."

"And remember Rudy Bolant? We thought that he was stuck up

and that it was our duty to teach him a lesson, and so we had been treating him coldly. He seemed so changed that Christmas Day and came so humbly and earnestly offering us the best and choicest of his Christmas box. God forgive us, we never learned until long after how cruelly we had misjudged him and what a bitter sorrow was crushing his heart." "Perhaps, Father Ben, God permitted our regrettable mistake to prepare Bolant for the heroic work he has since done for God and souls."

"Peter Mynell," Father Dietz rambled on, "was master of the games. In my young enthusiasm I counted him a greater leader of men than Napoleon. I marveled at what surprises he had in store for us and how quickly he lined us up for each new game."

"Did you ever learn what became of Peter?"

"He left the seminary ordination year and went to Nevada. That is the last I ever heard of him. I daresay he did not remain long there or anywhere else. Peter Mynell, with all his brilliant qualities, was a restless, roving character—a generous friend to everybody but himself."

"That's the time Rick Doolin threw the hall in such a riot with his artificial snake."

"Poor Rick," Father Casey murmured.

"Poor Rick," Father Dietz echoed."

There was tragedy linked with that name which neither cared to discuss.

The flame on the hearth burned low and disappeared, the smouldering logs slowly turned into white, fluffy ashes, and still the two priests sat silent, each busied with memories of past Christmas feasts, but memories of the successes and the failures, of the rewards and the reverses of the achievements and the disappointments of the glory and the shame which life had brought to the companions of their first Christmas at the seminary.

We take our friends too much for granted, whereas a friend is one of the most precious acquirements in all this human journey. You have lived a rich life indeed if you can travel the way with one loyal, sterling friend as your companion.

What our women are, that will the world be. They have it in their power to keep men in their place. If they are going to cater to the desires of men, they will be destroyed and they will, in turn, destroy their destroyers.—*Msgr. Bedford.*

Saint Louis, King of France

I. BLANCHE OF CASTILLE, MOTHER.

A. H. CATTERLIN, C.Ss.R.

As history gives us the first glimpse of Blanche, we see a tall, fair-haired girl of twelve years, with a most beautiful face and winsome grace. We see her step forth with her sister, Urraca, to welcome to the court of Toledo her aged grandmother, the famous Eleanor of Aquitaine, sometime "Queen of England, by the wrath of God."

It is to her aged grandmother that Blanche owed more than to anyone else her queenship of France. But it was not doting affection that caused the aged Eleanor to quit the convent where she was doing penance for the crimes of her life—the Convent of Fonte Vraud, and to take this long and toilsome journey across the Pyrenees, to see with her own eyes the young princesses as fame bespoke them, "so elegantly shaped in form and in feature, and so richly endowed by the good God in virtues and talents, that all the world must bow before them." It was to avert an impending war by a timely matrimonial alliance. For though the barons and bishops had chosen King John as the ablest atheling to fill the throne left vacant by the death of Richard the Lion Heart, yet the King of France was already arming to support the claim to the English crown of his vassal, young Arthur of Brittany. From Toledo she dispatched a friendly letter to the royal palace of France, putting it very plainly to the French king, Philip Augustus, that her son John could be reckoned to provide a handsome dowry in Norman fiefs, should either of her nieces be the chosen bride of the heir to France. In reply, there arrived from Paris no less a personage than the High Constable, Matthew de Montmorency, with full powers to negotiate a treaty of marriage. And old Queen Eleanor with her womanly tact, was on hand to suggest that the name of Blanche would be far sweeter to the Frenchmen's ears than the name of Uracca, her sister. The bargain was settled, and Blanche, the sweet child of twelve years, was chosen to be the future queen of France.

Eleanor, though eighty years of age, recrossed the mountains to accompany her granddaughter as far as Bourdeaux. Knowing how hated she was outside of her Duchy of Guienne, she rested at Bordeaux and confided Blanche to the care of the good bishop Elias.

The marriage could not be performed in Paris. The territories immediately subject to the reigning king, Philip Augustus, were under interdict. It was performed quietly at the Chateau Effrouté within the dominions of John, a castle built by Richard the Lion Heart as an act of defiance to his royal neighbor.

But the state entry into Paris was magnificent. The newly built palace of the Louvre had its walls hung with gorgeous tapestries woven expressly for the occasion. Everywhere along the route there was a wealth of garlands, with the white lilies of France interwoven with the rich green myrtle of Castile, and the roses of love gleamed between the laurels which were made to betoken the warlike propensities of the twelve-year-old bridegroom, later called Louis the Lion.

"Never queen so loved her lord," say the chroniclers of Blanche. She was one of those valiant women chosen by God to work for the souls of others, who seem to find a pleasure in submitting wholeheartedly to lawful authority, even when that authority is vested in a human being with abilities inferior to their own.

On her husband she bestowed that wealth of admiring tenderness which such women can give only once in their lives. She was a model mother, an ideal wife. But after his death that exquisite tenderness seemed to pass out of her heart. The less womanly virtues of independence and vigor were fostered, of necessity perhaps, to the cost of others. Into her spiritual life she threw all the fervor of her great strength and endurance which made her such a redoubtable lady to her barons. Of the fierce battles for humility she may have fought before the throne of God, the only visible result was a more severe and vigilant autocracy. Certain it is that Blanche ruled with an iron hand. There were moments in her career when one is vividly reminded of the haughty old grandmother, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Certainly when her severe holiness is combined with her wonderful genius, everyone would predict remarkable children of such a mother. In fact, two of her children, as we have said, are venerated on the altars of our churches as Saints of God.

Truly Blanche was ambitious, proud, imperious. These qualities appeared in her youth, both toward her husband, Louis VIII, and her father-in-law, Philip Augustus. Her pride, ambition and determined will is shown quite well in the following incident: In 1216 an embassy of English barons arrived at Paris to offer the throne of England to

her husband, then the crown prince of France. This was a hazardous undertaking. For the dethroned English King still lived, and there were still some loyal to him in spite of his great excesses. But the Bishops and Barons of England knew that they had the nation at their back when they sent this embassy to France asking the heir apparent to come and rule over their nation and to consider their country a territory of the French Crown.

Blanche was immediately fired with ambition. She was thinking of her two fair sons and of their future. Philip, her eldest son, was still living; Louis, her second child, was then less than a year old. "Some future day," she said to herself, "my eldest son shall have the throne of France, and Louis, my fair child, shall reign over England."

When the offer of the English throne was first made, Louis, her husband called the Lion, hesitated, and was about to refuse, for he knew his Father, the King, would never consent to it. But he had a still stronger character to deal with, his wife, Blanche. A throne as great, and fief as large as England, was not to escape her grasp so easily. "My lord," she said to her husband, "you will accept the crown of England." "But, no," said Louis, "it were not prudent for me to accept." "Prudence, my lord," said Blanche, "in this case is but another word for fear!" At this Louis, her husband, flushed with anger. "My lady, Blanche," he said, with a voice choking with anger, "you know full well that there is no one in France, not even the King my Father, who would dare thus to accuse me of cowardice."

"Then prove to me that you do not fear, and prove to the world that Louis of France possesses the ruling arm."

"And yet," said Louis, "I appeal to your better judgment. Would it be prudent for me to enter England without retinue and without guards?" Still Blanche persisted. "You say that you cannot engage a sufficient number of Knights to accompany you to England?" "That I cannot do," answered Louis; "how can I raise funds sufficient to equip them? And are they not the vassals of my father?" Then Blanche used a woman's strongest weapon of shaming her husband into acquiescence. "And if I alone and unaided recruit for you this band of Knights, who will uphold your cause across the channel, and if I without any assistance from you or your royal father, fully equip these Knights, will you then agree to accept the throne of England?" In reply Louis said: "I pledge you my word that if you do all this for the

cause, I will accept, and will face all opposition even that from my father and King."

Blanche was true to her word. Through her own personal efforts she had a splendid band of Knights, beautifully caparisoned, equipped and well mounted and all this through the pawning of her jewels.

The old chronicler, Matthew of Paris, is our authority for the following scene. Soon after the interview with Blanche, Louis laid the matter before his father, but as he had expected, Philip, the shrewd old statesman, advised him to refuse England's crown.

"We have trouble enough at home to oust the English from our own land, without going to deal with them in their own territory." But the young Prince Louis remembered his pledge to his wife. "Sire," said Louis to his father, "and if it not displease you, I will undertake this business." "By the lance of St. James, fair son, do as it listeth thee," replied the cautious Philip, "but I fear thou wilt never achieve thy attempt. The English are traitors and felons, and will not keep their word." "Sire," answered Louis, "I commit the adventure to God. I am only your vassal for the fiefs I hold in your kingdom, but you have nothing to do with what pertains to England."

The ambassadors were well pleased with this speech, and readily agreed to deliver hostages into Blanche's keeping in pledge of their good faith. Then Prince Louis embarked for his new kingdom with 300 knights and 600 boatfuls of men at arms. Events turned out just as Philip had foreseen. Within the year John, the deposed king of England, died, and his barons rallied around his little son, Henry, who was hurriedly crowned—some say with his mother's bracelet—and began his reign under the guardianship of the Papal Legate. Prince Louis, enraged at the breach of contract, wrote home for "Steel and gold" to push his claim by force of arms. But Blanche's jewels were already in pawn, and the wary old King Philip was not to be inveigled into a quarrel which was likely to embroil him with the court of Rome, for he was mindful that the Pope's Legate was the guardian of the young Prince Henry.

"Sire," pleaded Blanche, casting herself at his feet, "will you leave your son to perish in a foreign land? Bethink you that he is your own flesh and blood, why, Sire, he is your heir! Send him what he needs or at least the revenue of his own estates." "Indeed, Blanche, I will not," replied the king. "You say, Sire, that you will not?" quoth the

Lady Blanche. "Truly, no!" was the calm and firm response. Blanche rose to her feet with a wrath of a lioness, her Castilian temper was fully aroused. "Then, pardie, well I know what I shall do. I have two fair sons of my lord, and by the Blessed Mother of God, these will I put in pawn! There be many men of money willing to lend me large sums upon the heads of my children." "Blanche," calmly quoth the king, "take what you will from my treasury, to use as you think befitting. Only, mark me well, of myself I send nothing." "Sire," answered Blanche, "you say well."

We see how true it is that the old monarch was very fond of both of his handsome grandsons. It was his great affection for them that gave Blanche this victory. He insisted on retaining custody of both of them. And it is said that the old king wept like a child at the death of his namesake, Philip, the elder of the two, a bright, clever, intelligent lad.

This digression has been made from the general theme in order to give an insight into the truly great, yet thoroughly human character of Blanche, the mother of our hero and saint.

II. ST. LOUIS, THE FIRE BRAND OF GOD.

During all the years of his childhood, and during all the years of his youth and early manhood, there burned in the heart of Louis a desire as intense as it was holy. This desire which formed "the long, long thoughts" of his early life began at his mother's knee when she told him of the cruelties the followers of Mahomet had perpetrated against the inhabitants of her native Castile. On each of his birthdays, April 25th, Louis saw the solemn procession of the rogations, with the crosses of the procession shrouded in black bespeaking the sufferings and death of the brave Crusaders, for whom the litanies were chanted. These processions and litanies on each succeeding birthday so forcibly reminded the young Prince of the desire of his heart, to fight for his captive countrymen in the far distant East.

We have seen how dearly he was loved by the old Philip Augustus, his grandfather. It was the delight of the aged monarch to take St. Louis, when a little child on his knee, and recount to him his own adventures in that infidel country, when he took part in the Crusade of Richard, Coeur de Lion. The old King enjoyed the wrapt attention of the young Prince, the sparkle of his eye, the glowing of his cheeks, while every nerve quivered with enthusiasm as he listened to

the deeds of valor performed in a cause so sacred and so holy.

In 1223, when Louis was eight years of age, there arrived in Paris the famous knight, John de Brienne, titled, King of Jerusalem. He was on a begging tour, through western Europe, to solicit men and money for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. This veteran warrior had still more thrilling tales to tell, of his late unfortunate expedition to Egypt where he had been so loath to leave the remnant of his army, some in chains for Christ and some scorned by the Saracens as apostates, while the bones of others were whitening on the ramparts of Cairo. He related how his relative, Walter de Brienne, a prisoner in the hands of the Mongols, was hung up on a cross in front of his own fortifications at Jaffa, and the garrison was summoned to surrender or see him die in protracted agony. "Let me die," shouted the crucified hero. "Do your duty, and trust me to do mine till the bitter end."

Little could the narrator guess that the fair-haired lad, who listened so intently, was destined a quarter of a century later, to march his troops along the selfsame route, and secure for those wretched ones freedom, facilities of conversion, or Christian burial.

Was this enthusiasm on the part of the young Prince, but a boyish fancy? Was it merely the result of a fervid imagination? It was more than that. It was the grace of God preparing him for his great work in life. How true it is that the boy is father to the man. How easily we can discern the trend of a child's character, often quite early in life. Nature and grace work together very closely. Divine Providence had been most kind in bestowing gifts both of nature and grace upon this fair young Prince—gifts, indeed, that were not wasted, but gifts put to such good advantage as to make him one of the greatest saints of God.

Like other events in the Middle Ages, the Crusades have been to many modern writers an object of scorn and a favorite topic of abusive language. Louis IX has been called a fanatic and a visionary for taking part in them. It is said by many that this was the one thing that marred his reign. In the opinion of many modern historians, the Crusades were prompted by absurd and unjust motives; were carried on without judgment and were disastrous in their consequences. It is our duty to examine these charges, and see whether they rest on a solid foundation.

With regard to the motives which prompted the nations of Europe to undertake the Crusades, they were certainly as just and reasonable

as any that ever occasioned wars among men. It was for the purpose of putting a stop to the barbarous oppression to which the Latin pilgrims and Eastern Christians were exposed, that our European ancestors everywhere took up arms, and rushed to the field, urged by motives of honor, humanity and religion. Their ardor and readiness to enlist in this generous enterprise was moreover powerfully augmented by the earnest entreaties of the Greek Emperor Alexius, who called for assistance against the same barbarians then in possession of Jerusalem. The desire of rescuing the holy sepulchre from the oppressive yoke of those infidels may have been the most general feeling that actuated many of the Crusaders, but that was not the only object of the Crusades; the principle object was to save Europe from devastation which threatened from the invasion of the Orientals.

Indeed, the Musselman hordes had made great progress and seemed to conquer for no other end than to destroy Christianity and civilization. The restless and warlike spirit was truly most alarming, always inflamed and fostered by the fanaticism and the desire to pillage! Were the people of Europe to stand meekly by and wait for the yoke of servitude to be thrust upon them? It became the duty of the Christians of Europe to stem the tide of conquest of a dreadful enemy. Pope Urban II thus addressed the Knights and warriors of Europe: "Musselman impiety has overspread the fairest regions of Asia; Ephesus, Nice and Antioch have become Mahometan cities; the barbarous hordes of the Turks have planted their colors on the very shores of the Hellespont, whence they threaten war to all Christendom. Unless you oppose a mighty barrier to their course, how can Europe be saved the horrors of an invasion? How can the storm be averted which has so long threatened to burst upon our countries?"

Such were the objects and such were the motives of the Crusades; can any be conceived more pure, more noble than these? And, consequently, were not the Crusades just as justifiable as any other war? They cost, it is true, the lives of nearly two millions of Crusaders; but the loss, although lamentable in itself, was far from being as extraordinary and dreadful as might appear at first sight. Napoleon Bonaparte, in the course of twenty years (1795 to 1815), is supposed to have occasioned the death of no fewer than eight millions of men, mostly to gratify his ambition and desire for military power; yet this man is extolled as the greatest hero of modern times, but the promoters and

leaders of the Crusades whose views were so upright, so noble and so generous, are bitterly, mercilessly censured.

Two millions of Christians may have perished in those distant expeditions; but in thus perishing they save European civilization, secured the independence of Christian States, and laid the foundation of happiness and future prosperity. Do they deserve censure for all this? And does it become those who now enjoy the fruits of their sacrifice, to complain of their action?

Cardinal Newman says: "It was said by a prophet of old, in the prospect of a fierce invader, 'a day of clouds and whirlwinds, a numerous and strong people, as the morning spread upon the mountains. The like has not been from the beginning, nor shall be after it, even to the years of generation and generation. Before the face thereof a devouring fire and behind it a burning flame. The land is like a garden of pleasure before it, and behind it a desolate wilderness; neither is there any one can escape it.' Now I might, in illustration of the character which the Turks bear in history, suitably accommodate these words to the moral, or the social, or the political, or the religious calamities of which they were the authors to the Christian countries they overran; and so I might bring home to you the meaning and the drift of that opposition which the Christian world, headed by the Holy See, has met at every age. I might enlarge on the reckless and remorseless cruelty which, had they succeeded in Europe as they did succeed in Asia, would have decimated or exterminated her children; I could remind you, for instance, how it has been almost a canon of their imperial policy for centuries, that their Sultan on mounting the throne, should destroy his nearest kin, father, brother, or cousin, who might rival him in his sovereignty; how he surrounded himself and his subjects, according to their wealth, with slaves carried off from their homes, men and boys, living monuments of their barbarity. They carried fire and sword throughout flourishing provinces till they were left barren as the desert, hurrying away women and boys to a degrading captivity, and murdering the youths and grown men. The boys were trained to fill the ranks of their infantry, and were trained to the faith of their masters. Sometimes their masters would turn upon them and slaughter them as poor renegades from their faith."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Houses

THE HOUSE THAT WAS A STABLE

D. F. MILLER, C.Ss.R.

Once there was a house that was a stable. Only the wandering fields—bathed in the glorious sunlight or washed by the mellow moon—spread around and about it. It had been only a cave before it became a dwelling. It had been only a dwelling for animals before it became a home for men. And after men—or rather a man and a woman had found it—God thought it a most appropriate and beautiful place. So He came down from heaven and made it the home of His birth.

The years have passed. All kinds of houses fill the world today. Houses of the rich and of the comfortable and of the poor. Houses that have no trace of the poverty that adorned His house Who made the world—and houses that approach to that poverty, though they can never equal it. I used to wonder into which houses He comes today, when Christmas brings Him down into the world again. Then this story happened, and now I do not wonder any more.

I

It was a slushy day. The snow that had fallen in early December had long since been scraped up and piled high along sidewalks and gutters; but now the customary December thaw had begun to melt through it, making it soft and wet and sticky. The smoke from innumerable chimneys clung to it and gave it that dirty white appearance than which there is scarcely anything more unlovely in the world. Beneath the piles of snow numerous little rivulets might be seen escaping to spread their flood over sidewalks and streets. Overhead the sun shone down with a warmth that would have done credit to spring or autumn.

Along one of the sodden sidewalks a man walked rather listlessly toward the down-town district of the city. His felt hat sat rather low on his forehead; his overcoat was a little threadbare and shiny in places, but neat and clean. His rubbers must have outlived their period of efficient service, for he stepped carefully over the deeper streams of water as though not trusting the rubbers to keep his feet entirely dry. His hands were sunk into his overcoat pockets, and on his face was a sort of tired, serious expression joined with one of seemingly forced determination. He was looking for a job.

It was the day before Christmas. That was the irony of the situation. Looking for a job on the day before Christmas! Every time the thought struck Tom Crosby in that way—and it struck him whenever his eye fell upon the indications of the Christmas Spirit that were all about him—he smiled grimly to himself. Yet he could not drive from his mind the thought of his wife and three children at home, who were looking forward to what was going to be a very drab and unChristmas-like Christmas.

The children, of course, had been scanning the newspapers day after day, and planning out what Santa Claus should bring them. He remembered how he had seen them only the evening before, Tommy and Jack and Jane, sprawled out on the floor, pointing out with their stubby fingers the things they wanted most.

"I hope he's got one of those sleds left when he gets here," Jack had said. "See—like this one up in the corner. It's a flier."

"Aw, he won't have room for it in his bag," Tom cut in with a superior air. "All I want is one of those great big Erector sets, so I can build houses and bridges and ships and things."

"Oo look at the big Dolly," Jane had put in. "That's what I want mostest!"

Tom Crosby thought of the trifling things he had been able to get for the children who looked forward so expectantly to Christmas and could almost picture their disappointment. Why, he would not be able even to have a Christmas tree!

So, man-like, he was obsessed with the idea of doing something about it. He had lost a good job in one of the factories a few weeks before, and had found nothing to do since simply because there was nothing to be found. It was a general slump for the working man. But right up to the day before Christmas Tom was out looking for work, knowing, of course, that it would not help him to celebrate Christmas better now even if he did find it, but hoping to have at least the promise to cheer him and the family for the future.

But it was no use. Employers had no time now, even if they needed help, to give to work-seekers. Many of the shops were closed, if not indefinitely, at least for the holidays. After several refusals or disappointments, he set out again for home, stopping now and then to watch the crowds that surged so thickly around him.

The stores were literally blazing with color and light and beautiful things. He saw two steady streams of humanity, one entering the stores with eager, expectant, impatient faces, ready to buy; the other leaving the stores with pleasure and satisfaction written on their features, and with the results of their expenditures clasped in their arms. There were women with fur coats and dainty hats and bulging purses marching out majestically, followed by clerks laden down with bundles that they unloaded in luxurious automobiles. There were men joyfully yet furtively stalking out as they tried to look nonchalant when their awkward parcels poked the ribs of others around them. As each detail of the picture was borne in upon Tom, the emptiness of his pockets seemed to grow more abysmal and depressing. It was only when he happened to see a person or two looking hopelessly about like himself, or when he brushed against a group of tattered, untrained, wild little urchins pressing their noses against glowing show windows to view the wonderful things they could never hope to have, that he felt a little cheered.

Along the way to his home was the little parish church, St. Patrick's. It was a modest and simple little structure, built years and years before, but its very age and traditions made it a comfortable and appealing place to every Catholic. Tom usually stopped in for a moment or two; he did not feel like it today, but habit directed his steps inside as usual.

Nor did he feel like praying. He was rather in a wondering mood. He did not notice that the sanctuary lamp was not burning. The Church looked rather barren and plain, as is usual just before the time a person expects to see it festively decorated. Tom knelt down in the back and let his mind wander not rebelliously but perplexedly over the inequalities of life and his own particular difficulties.

Up in the front of the Church and in a side transept the Pastor, Father Hanley, was busy working on a crib. Tom took no notice of him, till he saw the old priest peering down the aisle with one hand to his glasses trying to see who was kneeling there in the rear. Finally he recognized Tom and came down the aisle to him. He had an old cassock on, the skirt of which had been gathered up and tied around his waist.

"The Blessed Sacrament isn't in Church, Tom," he said. "I've taken it into the Chapel. I'm trying to get the crib ready for tonight and I need some help. Can you give me a hand?"

"Sure, Father," whispered Tom. He got up and walked to the front of the Church, took off his overcoat and stood with his hands on his hips, looking over a collection of boards and canvass and stones and statues that were to take shape in a representation of the stable at Bethlehem. He waited for the suggestions or orders of the priest.

"I've got the ground work finished," Father Hanley began, picking up a hammer and box of nails and placing them at one side of the platform he had just made. "Now let's get these stones in shape, and we'll be ready to set the stable up in a jiffy."

Together they set to work. The old Pastor breathed hard and grunted now and then as he stooped low over the platform for the stones being handed to him. He explained his plans as he went along. Tom thought of his own home and its poverty, and slowly there began to dawn on him an understanding of it all. He was helping to build the house of the Lord that was a stable! * * *

II

About one o'clock Father Hanley looked at his watch.

"Time for lunch, Tom," he said, "and then some. I guess we've got the thing pretty well under way. Come on over and eat with me."

Arm in arm they walked over to the priesthouse. The housekeeper had lunch long since ready, and they sat down together in the little oblong dining room with its artistic religious pictures around the wall.

They chatted comfortably during the meal, discussing the work they had just left off. After a while the conversation veered around to other topics, and to the priest's inquiry about his job, Tom, of course, had to answer that there wasn't any such thing. Father Hanley was a good face reader, and he knew that Tom's words implied more than they really did. Before the meal was over he knew just what kind of a Christmas celebration the Crosby family would be able to have.

"Tom," he said casually, as they arose from the table, "I'll have to be in the confessional this afternoon and evening, but there's a lot of work yet to be done. Do you think you could come back and help me about nine or ten o'clock tonight?"

"Yes, I think so, Father," was the reply. There wasn't much to be done in his own home, he thought; why not work for the Infant?

"Fine!" said the priest, going to the door with him. "I'll count on you, then. By the way," he added, turning on him suddenly, "I suppose the family will all be at Midnight Mass with you, eh?"

"You bet, Father," answered Tom warmly. "We wouldn't miss it for anything. That's going to be our main Christmas celebration, you know," he added with a smile.

"That's right—that is the main celebration," said the priest, putting a handful of cigars in Tom's pocket. "As for the rest—the Infant will take care of you. You're working for Him. * * * Well, goodbye, Tom. See you tonight."

"Nine o'clock sharp! Goodbye, Father."

The door had hardly closed when Father Hanley made for the telephone stand and sat down comfortably beside it as though for a long conversation. He took off the receiver and called a number, puffing nervously at his cigar while he waited. The connection was soon made.

"Hello," he shouted, "Is this you, Agnes?" * * * Is your father in? No? * * * He will be soon? * * * Well, wait a minute—maybe you'll do better than your father for what I want—if you've got a heart and if you're game. * * * You have and you are? * * * That's good. But wait'll you hear what I want. It's a big order."

For almost ten minutes he talked—gesticulating earnestly to the mouthpiece. Agnes must have taken to his idea all right—for after he finished speaking he nodded his head vigorously to what she said at the other end of the wire—and kept slapping himself on the knee with his free hand.

"Good! * * * Fine! * * * All right! * * * Sure!" * * * He shouted in between times. "Yes, they'll be there. * * * I'll keep them plenty long. You bet. * * * I'll talk for an hour. * * * That's great. Good bye. S'long." Finally he rang off and wiped the perspiration of boyish excitement from his brow.

He began to whistle the "Adeste Fidelis" as he prepared for the work of the confessional. * * *

III

"Daddy," said Agnes Manning with an air of finality as she curled herself up on the arm of his big easy chair and took his hand in hers, "I want two hundred dollars."

The mountain of flesh that was Daddy Manning's seemed suddenly to shrink.

"Whoa—wait a minute—wait a minute! What's this?" he spluttered, as he recovered, rescued his hand from his daughter's grasp and turned sideways to look at her. He was really mountainously built,

had large bushy eyebrows, thick glasses, and what his enemies (if he had any) might call a bull-neck. Only he had a weakness. It was his daughter.

"I want two hundred dollars," repeated Agnes, calmly, trying to get back the hand she had lost as though that would be a pledge of success in her venture. The hand evaded her reach and came to rest on a ponderous knee—as the big man's eyes protruded with amazement and his paper dropped unheeded to the floor.

"Well, I'll be ——." He said it—or checked himself in saying it with an explosiveness like that of a cannon. Then he took off his glasses in a dazed sort of way and looked helplessly at his daughter.

"Is it the poor-house you're trying to put me in?" he asked with an injured air. "And do you think the day before Christmas is a good time to do it? Why, I've used up about three checkbooks paying bills for your Christmas presents—and now comes a demand—not a request—but a demand for two hundred dollars!" He addressed this last to the circumambient air, wobbling his big head back and forth and rolling his eyes in mock despair.

"But Daddy," said Agnes, "I forgot somebody—that is, I have to get something for somebody—and I have to get the money some place. I have to have it. Come on, Daddy, just two hundred dollars."

"Huh!" he mocked. "Just two hundred dollars! You forgot somebody that's good enough to have two hundred dollars spent on 'em! That's rich. Say!" he suddenly thundered, "you didn't forget me, did you?" His eyes twinkled as he said it—and Agnes saw that the moment was ripe to strike.

"How ridiculous!" she said with scorn. "But you would deserve to be forgotten if you knew what this is for and refused me. Come on, Daddy, I'm in a hurry, too." She jumped to her feet and seized his arm and started to draw him from his chair.

"As a lamb to the slaughter," he said meekly, as he went to his desk and drew forth his check-book. Agnes danced at his side until the check was made out—seized it before the ink was dry—kissed her doting father a resounding smack, and was off. He stood looking after her, chuckling and laughing to himself.

The next few hours were busy ones for Agnes. First she got her brother Ed and let him in on her plans. He was a little doubtful at first about joining in her scheme, being of a quiet, retiring nature, but

was finally swept along on the tide of her enthusiasm. Finally the two of them left the house and jumped into the largest car the Mannings owned—a Lincoln—and headed for town.

No one had ever seen such a whirl of shopping. They entered store after store—they came out time after time with arms filled with bundles—and packed them in the back of the car until it could hold no more. Finally they stopped at an open market-place and bought a large Christmas tree which they hauled out together and tied to the trunk-rest in back of the car so that it stuck out on either side and its branches swept the ground below like a street-cleaner's wagon. It was dark when the car was driven into the driveway of the Mannings.

The night advanced. The bells of St. Patrick's had pealed out their welcome to the faithful. Twelve o'clock had struck in the tower of the bank building near by. The streets were empty of the crowds that had fared forth for the midnight service when two closely wrapped figures stepped out of the Manning mansion and moved toward the big car parked in the rear.

"Come on, Santa Claus, hurry up!" whispered Agnes to her brother. "Our time is limited."

"All right, Mrs. Santy, coming, coming," answered Ed. "I hope our reindeer aren't balky." They crawled into the car and the engine sputtered and gasped a while before starting. Then they were off.

The car stopped before a little house set back from the sidewalk and a few feet below it. It was a poor section of town. The house next door on one side was vacant. On the other side there was no house—only a field in the back of which stood an aged, crumbling barn. They had intended taking turns watching outside to explain things to anybody who might think them bent on an evil purpose—but they saw at once that there was no need. Ed tried the door—it was locked, of course. He tried the windows, while Agnes stood and watched in an agony of suspense. The third one he tried yielded to his efforts. He crawled inside and unlatched the door.

Three-quarters of an hour—an hour later—the car standing at the curb was empty of its protruding bundles. The lights in the house went out suddenly and two figures emerged from the dark shadows out into the moonlight, and ran for the car. It was only when they were half a mile from the house that Agnes sighed with relief and relaxed comfortably in her seat.

"Thank God we got away with it," she said. "I was afraid Father Hanley would not be able to keep his word."

IV

The lights had been extinguished in the Church—all save those around and in the little crib—when Tom Crosby left it with his wife and children. They had waited until almost everyone else was gone. Then with a last look at the Christ-Child on His bed of straw—they moved toward the door.

It was hard for Tom to keep his thoughts away from the barrenness he knew was awaiting him in his own home. So he made a violent effort to keep his thoughts fixed on the crib he had helped to build. On the stable where his Lord had found so little to cheer and warm Him. If God could do it, he thought, it must be at least worth while to be somewhat like Him.

But the children—and Mary, his wife! They had seen the fine things—the Christmas presents displayed by everyone around them in Church. Tom did not mind for himself—he knew his wife would understand, too—but how could he make the children realize that the God Who chose a stable would be in their poor little home, too, even if or rather because there no luxuries and few comforts to be found there? He did not know that it is sometimes given to children to know the very secrets of heaven.

They were out on the sidewalk now—which with the coming of evening had frozen hard and become slippery as glass where the melting snow had made it slushy during the day. Tommy and Jack were running ahead and sliding on the ice—vieing with one another to see who could go the farthest. Jane, the youngest child, walked between her mother and father—each hand in one of theirs. The stars shone down benevolently upon them.

"Daddy," said Jane, "even if Santa Claus didn't come to our house—the little Infant came—didn't He? Because the priest said in the sermon that He likes poor homes—and we're poor, aren't we, Daddy?"

Tom looked down at this wise little girl of his with a look of wonder. She had echoed his very thoughts—the ones he had feared would be so far from the minds of the others who were dear to him. He had hardly heard the words of the sermon—he had been preoccupied or tired or something—but they had taken root in the mind of Jane.

"Yes," he answered, "that's about the size of it. We're poor—but

we don't need a lot of nice things to celebrate Christmas, do we, Jane? All we need is Our Lord."

"I think," said Jane, in that old-fashioned, decided way of hers, "we're going to find Him at home when we get back anyway."

The boys came wandering back to the group and joined in the conversation. Their mother had explained Christmas to them—how the presents and nice things were only the extras and not at all necessary to it. They took it all as a matter of course and forgot their disappointment.

"Gee," said Jack, thinking of the crib, "I'd hate to be born in a place like that. I'd be scared that old cow would get frisky or something."

"Aw, she wouldn't hurt you," put in Tommy, the oldest, deprecatingly. "You'd be glad to have her there—because that's all that would keep you warm so's you wouldn't freeze." He remembered this from the Sister's talks at school.

They were nearing home now. The boys ran ahead again and stamped about on the porch removing the snow from their shoes while they waited for their father to unlock the door. Mary gave him the key and with a rather heavy heart despite himself he took it and felt around for the lock in the darkness.

"Why, it's not locked," he said, pushing in the door. "Did you forget to lock it, Mary?" he added, as they all tramped inside out of the cold.

"Why, no," she answered; "I remember distinctly—" Then she stopped. The lights had been turned up, and for a moment every member of the family—even the children—stood transfixed with amazement.

In the alcove that served as parlor off the front room of the house—where before had stood only an old worn table and a few odds and ends of furniture—a Christmas tree now stood, spreading wide and far and reaching up to the very ceiling. It sparkled with every kind of imaginable ornament. It twinkled and danced and seemed to laugh with glee as its bright colors reflected the light that shone on it. Around it were scattered in the most varied profusion a collection of presents such as even with the aid of the advertisements of the newspapers—the children had never thought possible. Sleds and trains and dolls and games; there were new coats for the boys—a fancy wrap for Jane—an overcoat for Dad—a dress for Mother. All kinds of little boxes

and packages were scattered around or hanging from the tree. On the table—which stood in a corner now and was draped with red and white—stood a bowl of Christmas candy almost as big as a washtub.

"Gee!" said Jack, breathlessly.

"O-o-o-o!" was Jane's drawn out expression of wonder and joy.

Tommy was the first to recover. He whistled shrilly, and dove into the midst of the room followed by the other children.

"Well, well, well," said Tom, in a dazed sort of way, "I guess Santa Claus didn't forget us after all."

His wife, who had been almost as excited as the children and just as speechless, stood beside Tom now and spoke softly.

"It wasn't Santa Claus," she said; "it was just as Jane said," and she turned her husband around to look at what she had been the first to see.

Down in the corner of the room beside the door—a low stand had been placed—and on it one of those little one-piece statues of the crib, with the manger and the Holy Family all represented as in the Church. And over it there was a sign which simply said:

A Merry Christmas
from
The Babe of Bethlehem.

* * *

I once told this story to two persons, and they both told me, with a sympathetic smile (for me—not for the story) that it was a fairy story. One of them even added, as if to make it worse, that it was a religious fairy story. First of all, they said, poor people do not think or talk as the Crosbys talked, and secondly, rich people do not act as the Mannings acted. In other words, it's not being done, as they say in the world. So I just want to add that the story has really happened—and that for once I found out into which houses the Christ-Child enters, when He comes down to earth on Christmas day.

In the case of each one of us some particular virtue will assuredly dominate the course of Life's battle. If we can only make that virtue our own, the victory is assured.

"Unless you are a money-maker, I say, you will be considered as a fool, a pauper," said a scholar of the middle ages: John of Garland.

The Star of Tepeyac

J. H. LOPEZ, C.Ss.R.

Juan Diego, an humble Indian, was wending his way to the Monastery of Saint James the Greater in Tlaltelolco, a suburb on the outskirts of Mexico City, to attend the customary Mass in honor of Our Lady. It was Saturday, December 9, 1531.

He had reached the foot of the celebrated hill of Tepeyac, on which, not many years past, the pagans had offered human sacrifices to an infamous idol. Suddenly, the most entrancing heavenly melodies broke the stillness of the morning air—the Indian paused. His eyes were captivated by a luminous cloud encircled by a graceful rainbow. He was not troubled, nor disconcerted. His heart became enraptured with inexpressible joy.

"What do I hear?" he mused. "What vision stands before my gaze? Have I been transported into a garden of delights, into a heavenly region hidden from the eyes of men?"

But the heavenly vision was of short duration. Sweet notes of a silvery voice pierced his very soul and called him by name. The timid Indian ascended the hill, and there—a Lady in all the majesty of a queen—met his gaze. With a graceful smile upon her lips, she addressed him in his native tongue:

"Juan Diego, my son, whom I love tenderly, whither are you going?"

"My noble Lady," he replied, "I am going to Tlaltelolco for Mass."

"But listen!" she began. "Know well, my son, that I am the ever Virgin Mary, the Mother of the True God, Creator and Rewarder of men. It is my earnest wish to have a temple erected to my honor upon this very spot; and here, you and all who love me in this country of yours, will find a Mother ever generous and kind. I will shower abundant blessings upon all who have recourse to me with love and confidence. Go to the Bishop in my name. Tell him that I desire to have a temple here. Tell him all that you have seen and heard. I shall generously reward your zeal and diligence."

Prostrating himself, he answered:

"Most noble Lady, I am your humble servant, and I shall execute your orders without delay."

Then bowing respectfully to the Virgin—a royal sign of homage

among the Indians toward their Caciques (chiefs)—he made his way toward the city, to the Episcopal Palace of Don Juan de Zumarraga, of the Franciscan Order, the first Bishop of Mexico.

His early visit and his poor and humble appearance made an unfavorable impression upon the servants of the Bishop, and they tried to dismiss him at once. After considerable difficulty, however, Juan Diego was finally admitted into the presence of His Lordship. To him he made known the object of his mission.

The prelate listened patiently, but with laudable wisdom and prudence, did not give full credence to his recital. In the eyes of His Lordship, the so-called messenger appeared ill-suited for such a mission; and he feared to favor that which, after all, might be but the illusion of an Indian.

Juan Diego returned home with a heavy heart. Was his mission a failure? What about his answer to the Lady?

SECOND APPARITION

The glowing rays of the dying sun were lingering around the summit of Tepeyac as Juan returned home. And lo! there again the morning scene was reenacted. The Lady awaited the answer to her wish.

With the tender humility of a child, he bowed his head and told of his failure to obtain the object of her desire.

"My Lady, great men do not believe ignorant Indians like me. Send a messenger worthy of attention.

The Lady smiled at his simplicity and said:

"Son, know that neither servants nor messengers are wanting to me. You have been destined to bring about the mission of my heart. Return to the Bishop tomorrow. Tell him my wish, the wish of the ever Virgin Mary."

The Indian replied:

"Be not displeased, my Lady, about what I have told you. I shall go with good will, and with all my heart I shall obey you. I do fear that I shall not be heard, that I shall not be welcomed, that the Bishop will not believe me. Tomorrow evening, however, I shall give you the answer of the Bishop. Then, bowing low and humbly, the Indian departed.

The next day, Sunday, December 10th, after hearing Mass and assisting at the catechetical instruction, Juan again presented himself to the Bishop in obedience to Our Lady's order. The servants delayed

a long time before informing the Bishop that Juan desired an audience. Finally, having been received, Juan related how, for the second time, he had seen the Mother of God in the same place; that she had commanded him to return to the Bishop; that She insisted in her request; and that he was convinced it was the Mother of God who had sent him.

The prelate listened to the Indian and was inclined to believe him. To ascertain the truth of these facts, His Lordship questioned and cross-questioned Juan, but finally dismissed him saying:

"Give me your proof and I shall believe you. Tell the Lady who sent you to give me some sign that what you say is true."

The Bishop ordered two of his household to follow the Indian secretly, and to observe him closely. They followed him, but at the foot of the hill the Indian disappeared. Having vainly searched for him, the spies returned to the Episcopal palace indignant and vexed, and denounced him as a sorcerer. They begged the Bishop not to place any faith in the Indian's story, and to chastise him for his deception should he return.

THIRD APPARITION

The faithful Indian, however, had ascended the hill where the Lady awaited him. He gave her a detailed account of his interview with the Bishop. The celestial Queen encouraged him with sweet and gentle words:

"My son," she said, "return here tomorrow and I shall give you the sign which is required as testimony of your veracity."

The Indian left the Lady's presence—this time with a lighter heart, and a face beaming with joy.

The following day, Monday, December 11th, passed by without his being able to execute the orders of his Heavenly Queen. On his return to his hut he had found his uncle, Juan Bernardino, confined to his bed with a fever. The next day he grew worse, and Juan spent this day going for the doctor.

At dawn on the following day, as the condition of his uncle had become grave, Juan set out to bring the priest. It was on this morning that Juan, seeing the hill, recalled his promise of the day before, and fearing to pass by lest the Lady stop him and reproach him, he decided to take a path on the other side of the hill to avoid meeting her.

"First, I shall go for the priest," he said to himself, "and then stop here on my way back to receive the orders of the Lady."

No sooner had he come to this decision than he saw his Heavenly Mistress coming toward him from the summit of the hill.

FOURTH APPARITION

A new light shone forth from her loving face; stars crowned her queenly brow; angels carried her flowing mantle.

"Where are you going, my son," came a sweet voice, "and why have you chosen this path?"

The poor Indian, filled with fear and shame, fell upon his knees, begged pardon and explained his conduct.

"My son," said the pleasant voice, "be not troubled or afflicted! I am the health of the sick and the life of the dying. Banish all anxiety in regard to your uncle. He will not die; he is now in perfect health."

Filled with joy and consolation, Juan sprang to his feet and exclaimed:

"My lady, send me to the Bishop! Give me the proof he requires!"

Pointing to the summit of the hill, the Lady softly replied:

"Mount to the summit of the hill and gather the flowers which you will find there. Carry them in your mantle to the Bishop."

The Indian obeyed at once. He climbed upon a large barren rock absolutely devoid of all vegetation. There, to his amazement, he found a magnificent bed of sweet-scented roses, upon whose fresh delicately tinted petals sparkled pearly drops of dew. He gathered them and returned to her. She arranged them to her taste in the mantle, and then said:

"Show to no one on the way what you are carrying; and do not unfold your mantle until you are in the presence of the Bishop. Go now, in peace."

MARVELOUS PICTURE

Juan Diego soon found himself at the door of the Episcopal palace, but the servants ignored him. Finally his persevering insistence aroused the suspicion of a curious servant who noticed that the Indian was concealing something in his mantle. He came to Juan and asked to see what he carried so cautiously. But the Indian absolutely refused to show him his treasure. Then the bold servant violently pulled one end of the mantle, but no sooner had he done this than a celestial perfume filled the whole apartment. This attracted the household, and the Indian was led to the Bishop.

"Here are the flowers," exclaimed the Indian, "which the beautiful

Lady sends to you." With these words he unfolded his mantle and the roses fell at the feet of His Lordship. There before him, too, on the coarse mantle of the Indian, was impressed a beautiful picture—colors far more vivid than the delicate-hued roses—the picture of the ever Virgin Mary, just as she had appeared on the hill top of Tepeyac.

The prelate, filled with awe, fell upon his knees, as did his domestics. This was the first act of veneration offered to this miraculous picture, before which, in the long run of centuries, enthusiastic crowds were to prostrate themselves in loving homage.

The Bishop, after reverently loosing the mantle from the Indian's shoulders, had it placed in his private oratory. Later, it was transferred to other shrines, and finally to the magnificent Basilica in which it is to be found at the present day.

The Bishop and his retinue proceeded to the hill of Tepeyac, taking with them Juan Diego. After Juan had given a minute description of the apparitions, he begged leave to return to his beloved uncle, telling the Bishop of the miraculous cure the Heavenly Queen had promised. Accordingly, His Lordship dispatched two men to bring the patient to him should they find him really cured.

FIFTH APPARITION

The two envoys set out at once to the Indian's hut. As they approached it, Juan Bernardino, strong and vigorous, came forth to meet them. The messengers kindly invited him to accompany them to the Bishop, but in answer Juan Bernardino exclaimed:

"Ah, yes! The Virgin cured me completely. She commanded me to go to the Bishop; she desires a temple where she may be honored under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe."

Our Lady of Guadalupe! Such was the title chosen by the Immaculate Virgin herself. The word "Guadalupe," according to the interpretation of the best authorities, is derived from two Arabic terms which have passed into the Spanish language, and which mean "River Stream" or "Flood of Lights."

Such, in all its simple historical veracity, is the great miracle which has given rise to a new devotion to Mary. This devotion, implanted on Mexican soil by Our Lady herself, has spread to other countries—especially, South America and the United States. Our Lady of Guadalupe is invoked also in France, Italy and Spain.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, ruega por nosotros!

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pray for Us!



Archconfraternity OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP

The Story Of Perpetual Help

CH. XI. THE HISTORIC TABLE EXPLAINED

C. A. SEIDEL, C.Ss.R.

The Cretan merchant, as we have surmised, had planned to bring his hidden treasure—the Picture of Perpetual Help—not to Rome but to some other unknown city; but God “who ordereth all things sweetly” and “maketh all things work together unto His glory,” had willed otherwise: He had decreed, from all eternity, that Perpetual Help should reign atop the Esquiline Hill, in the Capitol of Christendom. There enthroned she was to stretch forth her hands over the whole earth, dispensing God’s graces to all the faithful. To effect this, God foreordained that death should overtake the merchant while tarrying at Rome. Here it may appear strange that this merchant should have found, in a city so far distant from the native land of Crete, so kind and hospitable a friend as the Roman. But we bid you reflect that he could have known him from former journeys thither, or that he had struck up an acquaintance with him during the year or more he lived there previous to his last illness. “It may likewise appear strange,” writes Rev. F. J. Connell, C.Ss.R., that the dying merchant expressed no concern for the return of the Picture to its original shrine in Crete, as strict justice demanded. Perhaps circumstances that history has not recorded made such a course impossible, and so he concluded that the obligation of restitution was sufficiently fulfilled by providing for the restoration of the Image to public veneration in the very heart of Christendom, the city of Rome.”

After the merchant’s death we witness a sweet and gentle contest waged between the counsels of man and the counsels of God. On one side stands the kind, patient, indulgent Queen of Heaven. On the other

the talkative, disobedient, wily wife of the Roman. This Roman seems to have been a "hen-pecked" husband as the expression has it, the plaything of his wife, the slave of her will. Justly has Carocci styled him a "uxorious husband" on account of his overdue attachment to his wife. In the first two apparitions—encounters as it were—the Queen of Heaven merely counsels the Roman to give up the Picture (Carocci says these apparitions occurred during the time of sleep; but of this the tablet says nothing). In the third she goes further in her attempt to move the obstinate man, threatening him with death. But even this proved fruitless. Consequently, in the fourth apparition she announced to him his too well-merited sentence of death. And this sentence, only too just, is immediately executed.

Someone might wonder why the husband rather than the wife was punished. For at times he appeared willing to part with the Picture, and she it was who always prevented him. To this Carocci replies in the words of an ancient proverb, saying that when an animal does wrong, it does not deserve to be punished so much as its master who should have trained it better. Be this as it may, we, nevertheless, piously believe, with many Catholics, that those whom Mary visits with chastisement are never eternally lost: their punishment serves but to awaken them to their fault, thus leading them to true repentance. So may it have been with the Roman.

One more battle yet remained to be won, and that not a little formidable, namely, the breaking of the Roman wife's stubborn will. To do this, it was necessary for the Queen of Heaven to return twice more to earth. In a fifth visit she appeared to the widow's six-year-old daughter (this apparition was of momentous importance, for in it our Lady revealed the title by which she wanted to be addressed in this Picture, to-wit: Holy Mary of Perpetual Help); and in a sixth she appeared to the widow herself. It was on this occasion that we first hear of the grandfather. He was mentioned most likely because at that time he was the acting head of the family owing to the father's death, and because, like his daughter, he, too, was unwilling to yield up the Picture.

This apparition had its effect in disposing the widow to comply with Heaven's command. Victory seemed certain for our Lady; and victory would have been hers had not that petulant neighbor put in her appearance. By her blasphemous remarks against God's Mother,

and her disrespectful declaration that the Picture possessed no greater worth than any other piece of painted wood, she succeeded in undoing her friend's firmly founded resolution. (What a striking instance is this of how bad companions can keep us from doing the good we would.) But victory must rest with Mary. Therefore, she prepares her forces to give battle to this woman also. Here again we learn that our Lady strikes only to cure, for by afflicting this woman with that miraculously sent infection, she wrings from her an acknowledgment of her guilt. This done, she, as instantly, cures her.

Carocci claims that this woman, just as she was about to cast the Picture into the leaping flames, felt a nauseating pain accompanied by a sudden swelling underneath her arm, and frightened, called in several doctors to diagnose the case. Unanimously they said it was a carbuncle. But its extremely sudden appearance and, what was not to be so soon expected, its festering condition convinced them that it was a chastisement from heaven. Carocci then concludes, declaring that she was instantly healed on touching the Picture. This is hardly probable, for we find no justification of it in the tablet, which plainly states: "When this neighbor returned home that evening, she was stricken with a miraculously sent infection. But on making a solemn promise to the Picture, she was cured." The Latin word "pestis," which we find in the original account, properly signifies any infectious disease apt to cause death, and does not necessarily mean a "carbuncle." The words "miraculously sent" indicate that the infection was a chastisement from on high, justly sent to punish her for her wicked words. Again, from the words of the text: "Imagini votum faciens" which we have translated "on making a solemn promise to the Picture," we glean that this woman, at sight of her infection, instantly implored our Lady to heal her, promising at the same time, if cured—as was the custom in those parts—to affix some votive offering to the Picture as a public testimony of her gratitude. Relying, therefore, solely on the words of the tablet, we think we are justified in contending that this woman's infection, her prayer with its concomitant promise, and her cure took place, practically speaking, at the same time. How quickly Mary helps her children!

Whilst the contest was being waged, no one doubted its issue: for heaven never lost a battle. But God through Mary acted, as He always acts, very slowly and very patiently. Unlike precipitate man, He abides

His own good time. That is why God granted repeated manifestations of His power, before all the obstacles to the Picture's removal were overcome. The way was clear at last; nobody dared longer resist Heaven's will. The Picture would be removed. Where, though, should they take it? This question, too, our thoughtful Mother deigned to answer. "Tell your mother," she commanded the little messenger, "to place my Picture between St. Mary Major's and St. John Lateran's, in a church dedicated to St. Matthew, the Apostle." And so it was done.

It may seem strange to some that Heaven should have intervened with so many apparitions just for the sake of a painted Picture; and they might even smile at its seeming absurdity. But we would caution them against a too hasty judgment. God's ways are not our ways. When we act we know not the future; but God does: He knows perfectly well the outcome of His deeds. With His all-seeing eye He looked down the years; He saw the inestimable blessings, the numberless graces, the strength of soul, the patience, the hope, the inspiration this Picture of Perpetual Help was to bring upon the world; He saw sinners turned from sin, and unbelievers embracing the Faith; He saw the healing of wounds, the flight of human ills; He saw virtue lauded, purity practiced, authority respected; and, last of all, but most of all, He saw—and was pleased with the sight—the spark that was to consume the world with love for its God and the Mother of that God—all this He saw, and more. And how true was His vision, history too well records.

Indeed, men may have thought those apparitions strange, but there was one who by reason of his superior intellect, thought otherwise. Satan saw clearly what glory and honor would accrue to God from the public exposition of such a Picture, and so he left no means untried in his eager attempt to prevent its veneration. Had the storm at sea sunk the ship with the Picture, he would have triumphed; had the Roman's wife remained firm in her will not to part with the Picture, and had that malicious woman succeeded in casting it into the flames, he would have triumphed again; and his triumph would have been complete. But he was fighting the Queen of Heaven; he calculated not his foe; he forgot that she was "as an army in battle array," and—he lost. Three centuries later, in 1798, when the French destroyed St. Matthew's Church in Rome, he thought he had won at last. Its shrine demolished, the Picture was forgotten. But scarce half a century passed when

Perpetual Help arose from her sepulchre and mounted once more her throne atop the hills of Rome, and there she still remains, true to her title, true to her office of Perpetual Help.

It may be of interest to note what a remarkable example our tablet affords of what is meant by the gradual development of a Divine communication. Heaven does not tell us its wishes all at once; it manifests them only by degrees. And how clear is this in the case of Perpetual Help! Consider for a moment how first our Lady merely commands that her Picture be taken out of the house; secondly, that it be donated to some church; thirdly, that it be given the title of Perpetual Help; and lastly, that it be given to St. Matthew's church on the Via Merulana. The Gospels are full of such instances. For example, in St. Matthew, chapter 2, verse 20, we read that the angel of the Lord first told St. Joseph in general to go into the land of Israel; and only afterwards pointed out to him in particular the part of the country into which he was to retire, which was "the quarters of Galilee." That fact alone, namely, the gradual unfolding of our Lady's message would be sufficient had we no other reason to suspect the account as genuine and heaven-sent.

In respect to the exact location of the Roman's house, we are in ignorance. Nor do we know whether or not that man afflicted with paralysis was cured by simply touching the Picture, as Carocci contends. The tablet is silent about it. Carocci, too, speaks as if only the man's right arm was paralyzed; but against him are Brutius and Turrigius, both of whom explicitly state that not only his right arm but also his whole right side was affected.

Finally, our tablet informs us that the translation of the Picture took place on Wednesday of Holy Week (for March 27th of the year 1499 fell on that day), "in the presence of the clergy and all the people." Such a large gathering of the faithful was due, no doubt, to the fact that, according to a decree of Pope Nicholas IV, of January 9, 1291, special indulgences were granted to all who should visit St. Matthew's church on Palm Sunday, or on one of the eight successive days. Well can we imagine the joy that must have filled the hearts of the faithful on that memorable day when though they came merely seeking an indulgence, they found a Queen, and a Queen that would ever be their living Mother of Perpetual Help.

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

"Dear Father:—I wish to make a public thanksgiving for a favor received. My mother had a very bad sore on the back of her hand. It had been developing for years and kept growing worse as time went on. She was afraid of consulting a physician—lest he insist on an operation. I began the nine Tuesdays to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, asking that a cure be had without operation. Mother's health had become such that an operation was unthinkable anyway.

As my prayers went on the hand seemed to get worse. I just kept on praying to our Blessed Mother for the favor. At the end of my second nine Tuesdays, the hand began to heal. All thanks to our Blessed Mother—for now the hand is entirely cured—and this without operation." (St. Louis.)

* * *

"Dear Father:—I wish to acknowledge publicly that through the intercession of Our Lady of Perpetual Help my petitions for employment and the cure of a wounded limb and failing eyesight were answered perfectly. Signed: An aged mother.

"P. S. Enclosed is an offering for a Holy Mass to be read at the shrine." (St. Louis.)

* * *

"Dear Father:—It was urgent that I succeeded in renting a room in my home. I am a widow with quite a large family to support and I needed this extra money badly. Though I had advertised through the 'want-ads' in the papers I got no reply to my ad. Then I turned to Our Mother of Perpetual Help for assistance. The ad was in the papers for a period of two weeks; and I had hardly begun to attend the Novena services when an answer came in the person of a very nice, and agreeable lady. Now my prayer is that she will remain with us.

"Enclosed a small offering for a Holy Mass in honor of Our Lady." (St. Louis, Mo.)

* * *

"Dear Father:—Some time ago my mother had a very badly infected finger, and blood poisoning set in. There was danger of her losing an arm. I promised an offering for Masses and a public thanksgiving to Our Mother of Perpetual Help if, through her agency and intercession, mother should recover. Thanks to Our dear Mother of

Perpetual Help, mother is now well and able to work." (St. Louis.)

* * *

"Dear Father:—Enclosed is an offering for a Mass of thanksgiving to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. On the 16th of September I sent in a letter asking you and the good people of the Archconfraternity to pray for my daughter who had been suffering with terrible headaches and nervous spells for six months.

"Four days after the petition was read the headaches began to leave her and now she is rid of them. There is still a trace of nervousness. Kindly ask the members of the Archconfraternity to remember her a little longer for she is the mother of two small children.

"Thanking you and all the good people for the prayers to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, I am,

"A firm believer in the Mother of Perpetual Help." (St. Louis.)

* * *

"Dear Father:—Some time ago I was to be married to a man who had been married before. He told me about his former marriage but he believed his former wife dead, although he had no proof for it.

"Someone told us she was still living, so we determined to make an investigation. We tried hard to find her and spent a large sum of money in making this investigation; yet no trace of her could be found.

"After all these efforts I began to make the Nine Tuesdays and prayed also to St. Anne, St. Joseph and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I also made a Novena of Communions and daily recited the Memorare.

"During this time a plan came to my mind and acting on it I found the first wife to be still alive.

"Thanks to Our Mother of Perpetual Help and the other good Saints for their protection. I am enclosing two dollars for a Mass of thanksgiving and promise to have a High Mass sung in the near future, likewise in thanksgiving.

"A Grateful Client." (N. O.)

* * *

"Dear Father:—Recently a National Poster Contest was held in which those drawing the best Posters would receive prizes. I prayed to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, asking her to help me win a prize.

"There were about three thousand posters submitted. I won a First and Second prize. Many thanks to Our Mother of Perpetual Help.

"I am enclosing a dollar for a Mass in thanksgiving." (N. O.)

Catholic Anecdotes

A FINANCIAL CRASH

In these days of stock-market panics, when so many are bewailing the loss of years of saving at a stroke—it is good to recall to mind the story of one who, almost a century ago, through a similar blow, was led by a faithful, understanding and saintly wife back to the God Whom he had long before abandoned. Father Blunt relates the story for us in his book, *Great Penitents*.

Paul Feval, one of the most prolific French writers who ever lived, had written up to the time of his conversion in 1878 one hundred and three novels and dramas. They were not good books, in the sense of clean or healthy, but, perhaps for that very reason—they had an extraordinary sale—and Feval became rich from the returns. For years he had an income of fifteen thousand dollars a year.

But unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for him, he had put all that he owned in one investment, in Ottoman bonds, which promised a high rate of interest. One day the foreign security failed—and at the age of sixty Feval found himself a ruined man.

On the day of the failure Feval's wife found him in his room in deep despair. He told her the news—and how everything they owned had been swept away.

"Nothing remains," he finished with a gesture of despair.

But the noble woman was equal to the occasion.

"My dear," she said, "God remains for us. If He chastises us it is because He loves us."

"What!" he exclaimed. "God loves me?"

"Will you pray with me?" his wife said simply.

He assented, and mechanically he repeated with her the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Hail Holy Queen. That was the beginning of his conversion. Later he said to her, as he paced up and down the room:

"What would have me to do?"

"In your place," she said, "I should go to confession."

He took her at her word. He made his confession, a confession of

a life that had been lived without God for fifty years, and he found peace in his soul again. So sincere was his return to God that he devoted the rest of his life to the almost superhuman task of revising all his books, and striking from them every objectionable passage. It was his practical penance for a life of sin.

I wonder if the stories of any of our recent stock-market failures will have such a happy ending.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE PLAINS

When old Chief Geronimo, the famous Indian warrior, was on his deathbed in 1910, Father Isidore, "The Comanche priest," made a visit to Fort Sill, where Geronimo had been living under the watchful eyes of Uncle Sam's army. Colonel Ennis, commanding officer at the fort, told Father Isidore that Geronimo was near death. Father Isidore announced his intention of visiting the old chief.

"I wouldn't do it, Father. The preachers have been worrying the old man all his life. I'm afraid it would be futile," Colonel Ennis said.

Father Isidore disappeared and in a few minutes reappeared in a carriage and invited Colonel Ennis to accompany him on his visit to Geronimo. Upon arrival at the aged chieftain's bedside, Father Isidore said:

"Pretty sick, Geronimo?"

The old chief merely grunted.

"Going to die?" the priest asked.

"Uh-uh," the Indian groaned.

"Got your horses all branded, Geronimo?"

"Uh-uh," more animatedly.

"You branded for Jesus? Jesus won't know you if you're not," said Father Isidore.

Geronimo thoroughly understood the language of the plains and he knew the significance of the brand in the plainsman's code. He was baptized and died a Christian.—*Denver Register*.

We remember the days of long ago when a man was considered shiftless if he lived from day to day, consuming today what he earned today. But now the problem is to curb the man who is consuming today what he will be earning six months from now.

Pointed Paragraphs

A MEDITATION FOR ADVENT

The opening of Advent suggests to us a few thoughts in preparation for Christmas. Christmas must mean the coming in a special way of Our Lord into our hearts. Why, then, should I prepare?

First for Jesus' sake. When recently Ramsay MacDonald, the British Ambassador and his daughter came to this country, how eagerly I read the papers, how interested I was! If they had decided to come to me, how I would have prepared.

But great people of this world would not think of me.

Jesus, however, does: as He came on earth to Bethlehem, so He wants to come to my heart in a special way—Jesus Himself—the King of all heaven and earth, in whose Kingdom the British Empire or any earthly kingdom is as a speck of sand.

Jesus, You deign to come to me; I hasten gladly to do all I can to prepare for Your coming.

Then, for my own sake. When I go to see someone and I find that they make much ado about my coming, and seem to be very glad about it, I simply give all that I have, do I not?

So also does Jesus. When He comes to a heart and finds that it makes much ado about Him, that it desires Him, that it has prepared itself carefully for Him, then He pours out all His gifts and graces into it.

I need God's grace; I know it only too well. I long for that peace of heart that is the root of all true happiness—that peace that Jesus alone can give. I need especially and want. . . .

For my own sake, then, too, I shall prepare carefully for Christmas.

Finally, how shall I prepare? My Jesus, if I knew the best way to prepare for You, I would use it, no matter what sacrifice it would cost. But I do not. And You do not ask anything of me, except what I want to give. I give You all. See, this is what I shall do.

Everything that I do during these days, I offer to You as a preparation, and I shall do it in that spirit.

I shall be doing my daily work; it will take up my time and thought.

You know that I must do it, and You want me to do it, because work builds up my character and You want to see my character perfect, in imitation of Your own most perfect Humanity. I offer You all my work as a preparation for Christmas.

I shall be thinking of presents for others during these days—buying and preparing them. I shall do it as if I were giving these presents to You, because You said: "Whatsoever you do to the least of My brethren, you have done it unto Me."

I shall eat and sleep and play as I must, and as You would have it; all for You, my dear Jesus, during these days especially.

I shall especially attend to my prayers and say them well, morning and night, and during the day; not longer prayers, Jesus, but better. Thus shall I give You more of my mind and heart.

And every day I shall say in my heart: Jesus, come! I long for You. Mary, Mother of Jesus, help me to prepare for Him as you prepared for Him at the first Christmas.

BUILDERS OF THE NATION

One of the great heroes of the Revolutionary War and one who contributed much to the winning of freedom for our country, was Count Casimir Pulaski, the 150th anniversary of whose death was celebrated recently. He was a devout Catholic.

Major Rodowski, who was himself wounded, thus describes Pulaski's last battle, the siege of Savannah:

"For half an hour the guns roared and the blood flowed abundantly. Seeing an opening between the enemy's works, Pulaski resolved with his legion and a small detachment of Georgia cavalry to charge through, enter the city and confuse the enemy, and cheer the inhabitants with good tidings. General Lincoln approved the daring plan.

"Imploring the help of the Almighty, Pulaski shouted to his men: 'Forward!' and we, 200 strong, rode at full speed after him, the earth resounding under the hoofs of our chargers. For the first few moments all went well; we sped like knights into the peril. Just, however, as we passed the gap between the two batteries a cross-fire like pouring showers, confused our ranks. I looked around.

"O sad moment, ever to be remembered! Pulaski lies prostrate on the ground; I leaped toward him, thinking possibly his wound was not

dangerous; but a cannister shot had pierced his thigh and the blood was also flowing from his breast—probably from a second wound. Falling on my knees, I tried to raise him. He said in a faint voice: 'Jesus, Mary, Joseph!' Further than this I know not, for at that moment a musket-ball, grazing my scalp, blinded me with blood and I fell on the ground in a state of insensibility."

CATHOLIC ACTION

The outstanding topic of discussion at the recent convention of the National Council of Catholic Men, held at Fort Wayne, was Catholic Action. The purpose was to determine just what the Catholic layman could do to further the work of the Church in our country.

Among the speakers was Admiral Benson, who said:

"The rediscoveries and inventions which many are misusing to their detriment and to society's, can be made the means of moral and religious upbuilding. The Catholic Church knows how to use the product of man's genius in the service of God. The arts and sciences are her allies.

"When the introduction of the compass served to increase the length of voyages by sea, she welcomed it as a new aid in the preaching of the Gospel. The earliest use of printing was for her mission. The first book that came from Gutenberg's crude press was a Catholic Bible.

"Let us be glad as the Church is glad that we have the airship, the radio and the automobile. They enlarge our opportunities for the spread of Catholic truth. Let us employ them in the cause of religion."

A PLEDGE OF HAPPINESS

In one of our Catholic newspapers, some time ago, I saw the following notice:

Among those who have made reservations for retreats at the Maryknoll Convent at Los Altos, is a bride-to-be, who will prepare for her wedding with four days of prayer in retirement. The young woman will complete her retreat the night preceding her wedding day.

Such preparation, in the opinion of the Rev. Edward Menager, S.J., who is conducting the retreats under the auspices of the Maryknoll Sisters, is in entire accord with the endeavor of the Church to emphasize the sacramental character of matrimony.

"Catholic young men and young women who spend a few days before marriage in retreat, are entering the holy state of matrimony in the right attitude of mind. As a result, their union should be blessed abundantly."

This, I believe, is a thought that would come to the mind of everyone who thinks seriously about the matter. Pass it along.

RIGHT IS RIGHT

Recalling that President Hoover, in his inaugural address, emphasized the principles of stability of government, obedience to law and authority and belief in God, the Rev. Dr. Fulton Sheen, of the Catholic University of America, speaking to the convention of the National Council of Catholic Women, pointed out that all these things are guaranteed in the acceptance of the teaching of the Catholic Church.

"If the first president of the United States and the 31st president both began their inaugural addresses with a plea to God," he said, "why cannot their fellow-Americans see that in our parochial schools we are carrying on their spirit? If it is good to mention the name of God once in four years, it is good to name Him every four hours, and if it is good to mention Him every four hours, it is worth while building schools where that name will be mentioned and loved, and that is the background of our parochial school system."

A COMPLIMENT

Professor Robert E. Rogers, of the English Department of Massachusetts Tech, paid a tribute to Catholic education when he said in a recent speech:

"The Catholic boy or girl seems to be far better trained and intellectually more competent in matters of religion and social ethics than the Protestant."

If his observation is true, it must be the fruit of the Church's insistence on religion as the most important subject in the school curriculum.

We all win from God exactly what we deserve. We all get from God exactly what we really want of Him.

A TRUE CATHOLIC LAYMAN

To Walter Lerian, baseball player of the Philadelphia Nationals, who was recently killed, a close friend pays the following tribute in the *Baltimore Catholic Review*:

"Death has snatched one of baseball's finest students from the game. Mr. Lerian's Christian name was Walter, but the name of "Peck" clung to him since the days he first played baseball in the uniform of Saint Martin's Catholic Club.

"Death, too, has snatched in him one of the finest Catholic laymen in all this broad country. 'Peck' Lerian lived the life of a Catholic gentleman on the ball field and off. His example edified all his associates on the Philadelphia team and other players in the National League.

"When the Phillies were in training at Winter Haven, Florida, last Spring, Lerian and three of his companions on his team went to Mass every day, and Lerian received Holy Communion daily. The other three men who showed their firm Catholicity were Hank O'Doul, who led the National League in batting this year; Denny Southeron and George Susce, understudy to Lerian in the Phillies' catching department.

"Mr. Lerian was making the mission for the men of St. Martin's parish. The mission opened last Sunday night. He went to Communion on the day of his death at the early morning Mass, and later in the day went to Confession, thus following out his custom of receiving the Sacrament of Penance weekly.

"In his sermon at St. Martin's Sunday night one of the Redemptorist missionaries told the men present to live good lives always, as men never know when death will come.

"The next night, Monday, the missionary told the men at the mission that Mr. Lerian had been knocked down by a motor truck which had skidded up on a sidewalk, and that he was in so critical a state that blood transfusion was the last hope of the doctors. He asked for some one to volunteer to give his blood. Fifty young men arose and hastened to the Franklin Square Hospital."

Trying to do good without being good is almost equal to trying to cultivate a crop that has never been planted.

After years of vicissitudes, one may find he has become hard-boiled in spite of himself.

Catholic Events

A new foreign mission field has been assigned to the Baltimore Province of the Redemptorist Fathers. At the earnest request of the Holy See, the Father General agreed to send Fathers to the aid of the Bishop of Corumba in the region of Matto Grosso, Brazil, South America.

This vast diocese extends over 400,000 kilometers and contains a population of 200,000, most of them Catholic, of Portuguese birth or descent. At present the Bishop has only eight priests to care for this army of souls.

By going to South America the Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province will add another language to their repertoire. Missions are now given, and apostolic work performed in English, German, Slavic, Polish, Bohemian, Italian, French and Spanish. Portuguese must now be added to the list.

The pioneers selected for the glorious work are the Rev. Father Francis Mohr, C.Ss.R., and the Rev. Father Alphonse Hild, C.Ss.R.

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At a scene of splendor and beauty, the Rt. Rev. Aloysius Joseph Willinger, C.Ss.R., was consecrated to the episcopate in Brooklyn. Bishop Willinger became Bishop of Ponce, Porto Rico, succeeding Bishop Byrne, who recently was transferred to the diocese of San Juan.

* * *

Sir Eric Drummond, secretary general of the League of Nations, visited Cardinal Gaspari, papal secretary of state, on Wednesday, Nov. 6, and was engaged with His Eminence in a long and most cordial conversation. On Thursday, accompanied by Mr. Randall, secretary of the British Legation to the Vatican, Sir Eric went to the Vatican and was received in audience by the Pope. After the audience, which lasted forty minutes and ended at noon, Sir Eric again visited Cardinal Gaspari. Sir Eric Drummond is a Catholic.

* * *

The convention of the National Conference for Catholic Charities opened and was held from Nov. 10-14 in New Orleans, La. Delegates included representatives of many religious orders for men and women, as well as laymen representing the various lay organizations in the conference and engaged in charity work. Among those who addressed the convention was Judge Brady of the Children's Court of Albany, N. Y., who spoke on the prevention of Juvenile Crime.

* * *

At the annual meeting of the National Catholic Welfare Conference held in Washington during November, sixty members of the Hierarchy discussed problems affecting the Catholic Church in this country, and

passed resolutions covering a wide range of Catholic thought and action. Two Cardinals, four Archbishops and fifty-four Bishops were present. Among the matters considered were: the mixed marriage problem—a Catholic radio program with a nation-wide hook-up once a week—the Catholic Press—the need for Catholics in the United States interesting themselves in Latin America—the Capper-Robinson bill for the creation of a "Department of Public Education"—the shortage of teachers—the religious vacation schools—and the further organization of the National Council of Catholic Men and Catholic Women.

* * *

Another convention deserving notice was the 14th annual convention of the Georgia Catholic Laymen's Association. The principal address was given by Admiral Benson, U. S. N., retired. The Georgia Laymen's Association is one of the most active organizations in the whole country.

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Titles and degrees awarded students of free schools in Mexico will be recognized by the Government in the future, by terms of a decree made effective October 22, by President Emilio Portes Gil, following a conference with the Secretary of Public Instruction. The decree restores to State status recognized Catholic and other free schools, and is looked upon in Mexico as an indication of the Government's intention to encourage private education by the Church and other bodies. In 1926 the free schools, most of which were Catholic, were refused recognition.

Among the provisions of the decree is that permitting schools to select their curricula without interference or limitation from the Government. Limitations in matters of school jurisdiction will not be permitted the government agencies, except in cases where the schools fail to adhere to the law as set forth in their charter.

The Secretary of Public Education is given the right to inspect the schools. The free schools are to receive no subsidy from the government.

* * *

Another circular has been issued in Mexico, by the Secretary of Gobernacion, ordering schismatics (those who left the church during the persecution), to turn over churches still in their possession to Catholic priests. The Secretary's action is intended, it is believed, to impress upon the few insurgents who did not relinquish churches when the reconciliation was effected, that it is the government's wish that the Catholic Church be given control of all its buildings.

* * *

In answer to charges of the Socialist Party, accusing the Catholic clergy of Mexico of arousing women for the purpose of influencing the presidential election recently held, Archbishop Ruiz y Flores, apostolic delegate to Mexico, issued the following statement:

"Everyone knows the rules that have been set down by the Holy See to govern the people in circumstances such as the present. Catholics, as citizens—and they are citizens—are obliged to seek the good of

the country and their own well-being, and to use their political rights in accordance with morality and the dictates of their conscience.

"They are free to affiliate themselves with whatever party or candidate they hold to be preferable for the public good.

"But the Bishops and the priests should remain in a position where they are outside all political parties, and above all, partisan politics: because the Church in circumstances like the present in Mexico, does not seek to influence in any manner the change of administration, and much less to possess herself of political power."

* * *

Four members of the new Tardieu ministry in France are Catholics: Georges Pernot, minister of public works; Champetier de Ribes, undersecretary of state for finance; Robert Serot, undersecretary of agriculture, and Dr. Oberkirch, undersecretary for hygiene.

* * *

More than 1,000 students from 30 Catholic colleges and high schools in the Chicago district assembled on Nov. 1, for the seventh meeting of Ciscora, the Chicago Student Conference on Religious Activities. More than 50 delegates took the floor and told their assembled fellow students how religious activities are carried on in their respective schools. Under the head of Catholic Action, special attention was paid to the possibilities of helping the Catholic blind of Chicago, by cooperating with the Red Cross society in printing Catholic books.

* * *

The seminary of the first religious congregation of men to be founded by Chinese, the Congregation of the Disciples of the Lord, with their center at Suanhwafu, has been erected through the generosity of the Missionary Association of Catholic Women, with headquarters at Milwaukee, Wis. The Seminary now complete, announces the visit of His Excellency, the Most Rev. Celso Constantini, Apostolic Delegate to China.

The Congregation of the Disciples of the Lord was founded with the encouragement of the Apostolic Delegate by the late Bishop Chao of Suanhwafu. The direction is confided to a group of Spanish Redemptorist Fathers, under the superior, Father Rodriguez, who will remain until the new community reaches a stage of autonomy.

The object of the Congregation of the Disciples of the Lord is to offer native Chinese priests to the territories in China and to favor religious vocations.

* * *

Of fifty-three plays reported on in the quarterly Bulletin of the Catholic Theater Movement—a bulletin issued by a committee composed mostly of laymen, under the patronage of Cardinal Hayes of New York—only four have been submitted as deserving a place on the "White List." The reports deal with plays appearing from July to October. Those admitted to the White List are: "Her Friend the King," "A Hundred Years Old," "Jerry for Short," and "Remote Control."

Some Good Books

When the Veil is Rent. By Francis Clement Kelley. Published by P. J. Kenedy and Sons. 189 pages. Price, \$2.00.

This book has been chosen by good authority as one of the best books of the year. It would be superfluous for one them to say anything in praise of it.

It is a mystery story. Mystery stories are the vogue just now; I've seen professors and laborers, business men and busy clergymen improving their leisure moments with a mystery story of some kind.

But this one is different. The others are about more or less trifling mysteries; this story is about the supreme mystery. And consequently, it has a strange and gripping fascination. You want to see how it is going to end.

The author is Rt. Rev. Francis Clement Kelley, Bishop of Oklahoma.

Thus Shall You Pray. By the Rev. Eldred Law, O.Cist. Adapted by Isabel Garahan, B.A. Published by B. Herder Co., St. Louis. 274 pages. Price, \$2.00.

It is really bewildering to one who stops to think what a mass of printed material is flowing from the presses every day. And it is becoming a commonplace, that a great deal, perhaps most of it, is of little or no value and much of it is positively harmful.

What a blessing it would be, if we could succeed in making our people return once more to old habits of spiritual reading—even if it be for only half an hour every day!

Such a book as the one we recommend here would provide many a useful and blessed half hour. Indeed, I feel quite sure, they would not stop with half an hour. There is so much that is consoling, encouraging, heartening in its different chapters, as it unfolds the deeper meanings hidden in the Our Father.

For it is just that—an interpretation of the petitions of the Our Father. Priests will find much material and many suggestions for their sermons. In fact, it grew out of a series of Lenten sermons.

D. B. Hansen and Sons of Chicago send a number of little booklets for instruction and devotion.

A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, prepared and enjoined by order of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore No. I and No. II. Price, paper cover, \$4.00 per hundred; linen cover, \$8.00 per hundred.

Christian Doctrine Drills. For Use in the Parochial Schools. Price, 5 cents per copy; \$3.50 per hundred.

St. Jude Leaflet—with novena praying a brief account of the Apostle's life, and prayer suitable for a novena.

St. Jude Booklet—with novena prayers. Price, \$1.00 per hundred.

So That's That! By Inez Specking. Published by B. Herder, St. Louis. 209 pages. Price, \$1.50.

Perhaps it is just the first story that gives the name to this book—perhaps it is the snap and brevity and finality of each story. For this is not a novel, but a collection of short stories. And most of them, I should say, are splendid. One did not seem to me to ring true. Some carry a telling lesson. I don't hesitate to say, you will like the book.

Manner and Good Manners. A Guide to Correct Social Usage for Catholic Schools and the Home. By Sister James Stanislaus, S.S.J. 142 pages. Price, \$1.75.

Books on etiquette are quite numerous and are much in demand. Everyone wants to do the "right" thing in social intercourse. It gives one the appearance, at least, of being "to the manner born."

But Sister James Stanislaus realizing that good manners are but the outward expression of a good heart, goes somewhat deeper. And we ought to be grateful to her for this text-book for School children on the Manner and Good Manners that should issue from and adorn a truly Catholic heart. The points are very detailed, practical and simple, so that they can be of aid to pupils of the grade-school as well as of the higher schools.

Some Good Books

Particular Examen. By the Rev. J. F. McElhone, C.S.C. Published by B. Herder, St. Louis. 216 pages. Price, \$1.75.

The title may puzzle some people who are not familiar with the ways and means of the spiritual life. It is simple.

Spiritual life is character development in its highest and most ideal form. Every human being must be interested in character formation. Nowadays we are beginning to realize that it is one of the greatest needs in our educative process—that is, we are beginning to come back to this idea which is as old as the hills.

Now one of the chief hindrances in the individual to his perfect development is some fault or evil habit—and generally—there is some predominant fault from which all others flow.

Particular Examen is a daily examination of oneself in regard to such predominant evil habits or faults. Rightly made therefore, it is a most effective means of character development.

Father McElhone's book is a very good guide in the practice of Particular Examen. It is a book, therefore, that every person who is serious about his own personality will be glad to have and use.

The Children's Hour. Sermons for the Children's Mass. Edited by the Rev. Karl Doerner. Adapted into English by the Rev. Andrew Schorr. Published by B. Herder, St. Louis. 337 pages. Price, \$2.25.

All priests recognize the difficulty in preaching to children. There has been so much said recently about religious education—its necessity—and its methods—that we may be still more conscious of the difficulty of explaining Catholic faith and morals to them in a helpful and practical way.

The sermons presented in English by Father Schorr will be of great assistance to everyone who has the important duty of preaching to children—and more

than one he will find a complete sermon that satisfies just as it is.

The subjects are arranged according to the ecclesiastical year—as far as possible. There is a wealth of illustration and anecdote—things that appeal to the child mind and heart. Of course, not everything may be to your taste.

Eucharistic Whispersings. Being Pious Reflections on the Holy Eucharist and Heart Talks with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Adapted by Winfred Herbst, S.D.S. Published by the Society of the Divine Savior, St. Nazianz, Wis. 108 pages. Price, paper, 35c; cloth, 65c; leather, \$1.25 and \$1.75.

Very beautiful, very touching, very devout these reflections are. I think everyone will appreciate them. This is Volume Four. No doubt it will be welcomed as were the preceding three volumes.

Greater Perfection. The Spiritual Conferences of Sister Miriam Theresa, Litt. B.

One has only to read these conferences written by the young Sister of Charity to realize why they have received such widespread and enthusiastic reception on the part of religious communities. Sister Miriam's asceticism is solid and practical; her manner of writing is simple yet beautiful; her spirit is one of humility and love.

God the Redeemer: The Redemption From Sin As Wrought By Jesus Christ the Son of God. A Textbook for Colleges and Universities. By Charles G. Herzog, S.J. Published by Benziger Brothers, New York. 230 pages. Price, \$3.00.

The present volume is one of a series of texts for the teaching of Religion in the schools of higher education. We have need of such text books.

Father Herzog has given us a very complete treatise on the matter. His book, moreover, has the aids a text should have, such as good arrangement, marginal titles, questions for review, and distinction of type. I think still more could have been done in this regard. But as a whole it is very satisfying.

Lucid Intervals

Mother—Tommy, why are you striking your little sister?

Tommy—Well, we were playing paradise and I gave her an apple so she might tempt me and then she ate it all.

A husband found some holes in his socks and said, "Wife, dear, why haven't you mended these?"

"Hubby, darling, did you buy me that fur coat you promised?"

"No-o."

"Well, if you don't give a wrap, I don't give a darn."

A man journeying homewards in the early hours found a belated reveller vainly endeavoring to insert his key into the keyhole.

After the eighth attempt the man approached and said: "May I assist you?"

"Shertainly-hic-not," replied the man with the key. "S'out of question."

He returned without success to his attack on the keyhole.

"Well, I'll knock for you."

"Most, mos-hic—decidedly not," said he of the key; "let 'em wait."

"Does the razor take hold well?" inquired the barber as he cut away on the bleeding cheek of his suffering victim.

"Yes," groaned the martyr, "it takes hold first rate, but it don't let go worth a cent."

Spinks: "You say your sister makes up jokes; then she's a humorist?"

Binks: "No; she works in a beauty parlor."

"I'm sorry I couldn't come to your party yesterday."

"Dear me! Weren't you there?"

"Oh, why, of course I was! How stupid of me—I must have forgotten!"

Parson—Why do you desire to join the church?

Rastus—Pahson, I'se got a job puttin' a roof on a chicken house and fencin' a watermelon patch—an' I needs strengthenin'.

"What do you know about cooking?" asked Mrs. Snapp of the applicant for position of cook.

"Nothing much, ma'am," came the answer, "but Ah knows a terrible lot about de private affairs ob most ebrybody in town."

An old negro was brought into a police station charged with vagrancy.

"Law, mistah, I ain't no vagrant! I's a hard-workin' religious man. Look at dose!" And he pointed proudly to the large patches ornamenting the knees of his trousers. "I got dem f'm prayin'!"

"How about the patches on the seat of your breeches?" asked a policeman.

The negro looked sheepish for a moment, then:

"I reckon I must have got does back-slidin'," he said.

Judge—Well, Exodus, I see you are back in court, charged with loafing and having no visible means of support. What have you got to say for yourself this time? Why don't you go to work?

Exodus—Dat's it, jedge; dat's jes' it. Dat's mah main trouble. Ah gets a new job an' Ah tink Ah'm fixed fer life—an' den de boss tells me ter quit, cos Ah'm too hebbey fer light work an' too light for hebbey work.

It was at a dance in Louisville. Up to one of the dusky damsels stepped Big Walt. "Pahdon me, Miss Mandy, am yo program full?" "Lordee, no, Mist' Sumley; takes mo' than two sandwiches an' an olive to fill ma' program.

Trim the Barber—It's raining very hard outside. Why not stay a while and have a shampoo?

Mac the Scot—No, thanks. I'll just keep my hat off walking home.

A newly wed couple were given a dinner. After the final course, the groom was asked to say a few words. In much confusion he rose, placed his hand on the bride's shoulder, and stammered:

"T-this h-has been forced on me r-rather unexpectedly."

Redemptorist Scholarships

A scholarship is a fund the interest of which serves for the education of a Redemptorist missionary in perpetuity.

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